



# MANATABA MESSENGER

A Publication of the Colorado River Indian Tribes

Volume I Issue I

December, 2003

## Tribes ressurects *Manataba Messenger*

### Dear Tribal Member:

You're looking at the first new issue of *Manataba Messenger*, the revived publication developed by the Tribal Government to serve tribal members. The goal of the publication is to serve as a regular newspaper for CRIT members, updating them on a variety of happenings in the Tribal community. It is also a place for telling stories, congratulating those in

our tribe who do good things, and keeping in touch with members of our community.

The original *Manataba Messenger* was first put out in September 1980, but stopped being published in May 1982 for budgetary reasons.

*Manataba Messenger* will replace the CRIT Tribal Newsletter, but will still include many of the features of that publication as well. The publication will be coordinated by my office.

*Manataba Messenger* welcomes input and suggestions from all CRIT members. If you have an idea for a story or other comments on the publication, please call us at (928) 669-1233 or (928) 669-1223. Leave a message with the information and someone will get back to you. We hope you enjoy the *Manataba Messenger*!

Sincerely,  
Councilwoman Cindy Homer



Raquel Nopah (center) was named Ms. CRIT in the October pageant. Little Miss CRIT is Toni Stone and Jr. Miss CRIT is Lia Welsh.

## Ms. CRIT and CRIT royalty awarded

The Ms. CRIT competition was a family tradition for Raquel Nopah.

Raquel became the second woman in her family to be named Ms. CRIT in the October pageant. Raquel's sister, Tatum, is a previous Ms. CRIT.

Raquel sang a song about Iwo Jima in Navajo during the talent portion of the contest, accompanied by her grandfather, who is a Navajo code talker.

"The pageant was great because we got to

meet a lot of new people," she said. "I wanted to be Ms. CRIT to represent the people of all four of our tribes and educate others about us."

Raquel is taking classes at AWC and is planning on going into nursing. She is Navajo and Mohave, and spends much of her free time involved in traditional Navajo activities.

Congratulations to Raquel Nopah on being named Ms. CRIT for 2003-2004!

## Ruling protects CRIT members from Town of Parker taxes

The Arizona Department of Revenue (ADOR) has ruled that members of the Colorado River Indian Tribes do not have to pay State and Town sales taxes at businesses within the Town of Parker.

The ruling is based on federal court decisions in 1985 and 1989 which hold that because the Town is part of the Colorado River Indian Reservation, Arizona law exempts Native Americans from paying State sales taxes on their Reservation.

The ADOR ruling specifically states that CRIT members do not have to pay the State transaction privilege tax and the Town privilege tax at businesses within the boundaries of the CRIT Reservation, including Parker.

This had long been the understanding of the local community, but in March, Town of Parker officials asked ADOR to clarify the sales tax issue. ADOR issued an opinion in April that indicated that CRIT members were not exempt from State and Town sales taxes within the Town of Parker.

However, according to Scott Greeves, Tax Analyst for ADOR, this opinion was based on the incorrect assumption that the Town of Parker was not Reservation land.

Please see TAXES, Page 4

## Tribe renews efforts to regain La Paz Lands

### Lands taken from Tribe in early 1900s under Wilson administration

The Colorado River Indian Tribes have renewed long-standing efforts to reclaim a parcel of land taken from them by the Federal Government during the administration of President Woodrow Wilson.

The La Paz lands, a parcel of about 16,000 acres adjacent to CRIT's southeastern

boundary, is a mountainous and uninhabited area west of Ehrenberg and east of Quartzsite along Interstate 10.

The lands are part of the ancestral homeland of the Mohave people and were recognized as part of the Colorado River Indian Reservation by President Ulysses S. Grant. In 1915, the parcel was taken from the Tribe by

Please see LANDS, Page 4

## In This Issue...

- ♦ La Paz Lands importance, Page 2
- ♦ Message from Tribal Council, Page 2
- ♦ Desert dumping: Don't do it, Page 2
- ♦ Poston restoration continues, Page 2
- ♦ Update on preserve, Page 3
- ♦ Upcoming events, Page 3
- ♦ Johnson O'Malley program, Page 3



# News, information from your Tribal Government

**Chairman Daniel Eddy Jr.**  
**Vice Chairman Russell Welsh**  
**Tribal Council: Cindy Homer (Secretary),**  
**Eldred Enas (Treasurer), Dennis Patch,**  
**Daphne Hill-Poolaw, Ray Aspa, Sr.,**  
**Herman “TJ” Laffoon, Valerie Welsh-Tahbo**

## La Paz Lands part of CRIT heritage, history

It’s been a long time coming.  
The CRIT Tribal Government has once again renewed efforts to reacquire the La Paz Lands south of the CRIT reservation. Readers may recall that the late Senator Barry Goldwater supported these efforts.  
The lands were CRIT’s until the Wilson administration, when mining interests at the time persuaded the Federal Government to take back the lands so they could be mined.  
Now, with the help of Congressman Raul Grijalva and other members of Arizona’s congressional delegation, we may be closer than ever before to gaining these lands back.  
The Tribe’s desire to reacquire these lands is not about economics. The mining claims currently on the land will be honored by CRIT; the lands are not a good location for gaming.  
Instead, this issue is about our tribe regaining part of its history and heritage, lands where our ancestors walked and worked for hundreds of years.

It was wrong for the Federal Government to take these lands for private interests early in the last century. But this is a wrong that can still be corrected today.  
The CRIT Tribal Government would like to thank Congressman Grijalva and the other members of Arizona’s delegation for their efforts to help our tribe regain these lands.  
With their help, we may be closer than ever before to correcting this injustice of the past, and returning these ancestral lands to the ownership of those who value them most.



## Have a great Holiday season and New Year

The CRIT Tribal Council would like to wish all tribe members a very happy holiday season.  
We’ve made great strides in the past year in the areas of housing, health care and business development. And we’ve also continued work on the tribal preserve along the Colorado River.  
And we’ve undertaken important projects to improve our reservation, such as working to reacquire the La Paz Lands and to continue to boost tribal agriculture.  
All of these accomplishments are the direct result of the hard work of members of our tribes.  
You are the reason the quality of life on our reservation continues to improve.  
We have a long way to go to reach the goals we’ve set for ourselves as a tribal community. But with each passing day, and each passing year, we get closer and closer.  
We hope you will join us in reflecting on these accomplishments, and we thank you for your continued support.

— Your Tribal Council

## Desert dumping: Don’t do it

Dump your trash in the desert, get a fine.  
That’s the message being sent by the CRIT Environmental Protection Office, which is cracking down on dumping in the desert.  
Desert dumping not only creates ugly eyesores on the reservation, it can create environmental and groundwater problems as well. And the EPO’s enforcement officers say they’re going to do whatever they can to prevent that from happening.  
“If we find the person who dumps trash in the desert, we’re going to issue a major citation, period,” said Ramona Banuelos of the Environmental Protection Office.  
“We want to educate people about the importance of proper dumping. We don’t want anything — especially hazardous materials — dumped on the reservation or especially near a waterway.”  
The fines for desert dumping can range from \$100 to \$1,000.  
EPO staffers will often search through trash dumped in the desert to find evidence that could lead them to a culprit. If they find enough evidence, they will track down that person and cite them.  
The EPO was started in the early 1980s to mainly monitor pesticide use on CRIT farms.

### A Reminder from the CRIT Auto Department

Those who wish to utilize the Motorpool Vans at CRIT Auto may only check them out for two reasons:  
1. Death or grave illness in your IMMEDIATE family.  
2. Royalty and groups (school, 4-H, church etc).  
All medical appointments out of town can be handled through CHR with 24-hour notice by calling 669-8187.  
If you are a senior citizen and need transportation for errands, call the Senior Citizens Center at 662-4283.  
Please do not ask other departments for their vehicles. They are for their department use only.

But since then, it has expanded its duties to protect the desert environment as well.  
CRIT members have free access to garbage dumping at transfer stations in Parker or Poston, or by going directly to the La Paz County Landfill outside Quartzsite.

## Poston Restoration Project moves forward with workshops, public forums

**By Ruth Okimoto and Jay Cravath**  
CRIT Education Department

Plans to document and preserve the “living histories” of both CRIT members and the Poston internees as well as restore the remaining Poston buildings are moving forward under the guidance of the Tribal Education Department and other departments.  
The Poston Restoration Project Workshop in October included more than 30 people from CRIT and the Japanese American communities working together for two and a half days to plan for the development of a “living history” museum on the Poston Camp I school site.  
On January 4, 2001, the Colorado River Indian Tribal Council passed a resolution to “Initiate the recognition, restoration & future development of the Japanese Internment Camps.” Since then, Tribal Councilman Dennis Patch, Jon Villalobos, and Ruth Okimoto have shared their ideas for this project—restoring the Poston Camp I auditorium, classrooms and barracks—with former Poston internees in San Diego, Los Angeles, Watsonville and Sacramento. A fire destroyed the Camp I auditorium that was to be the main centerpiece and the project was put on hold for two years.  
Now the CRIT Education Department has “jump-started” the project by bringing together key stakeholders to form the working relationships and strategic planning framework that will restore not only the physical buildings that remain on the reservation, but also to capture the “living histories” of both the Japanese American internees and members of the Colorado River Indian Tribes community.

The Poston Restoration Project received two grants to develop the needed organizational infrastructure: from the National Trust for Historical Preservation and the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program. Also, private donations from former Poston internees, relatives and friends helped to support the workshop.  
The next phase of the workshops on the project, to begin after October 2003, will implement an operational plan to save and recondition existing barracks, internee classrooms and the auditorium.  
Among the committees formed to push the project ahead are: History/ Interpretation (collecting stories — “living histories” — of tribal members and Poston internees); Infrastructure/Construction (building the Project); Grantwriting/Fundraising (identifying sources of revenue for rehabilitation and construction); Outreach/Education (identifying volunteers and education institutions for collaboration) and Communication/Public Relations (getting the word out).  
Tribal members and the general public are invited to call the Education Department if you are interested in serving on one of these committees. If you have stories that relate to the internment camps or life on the reservation during those years, please let the Education Department know.  
Even those stories related to the buildings or barracks after the Japanese Americans left would be appreciated. Those histories will be added to the archives to shape an accurate portrayal of the experience. For more information, call the Education Department at (928) 669-8831.



# Upcoming Events

## Fun events on tap at Blue Water

Several big shows and events are coming to the Blue Water Resort & Casino in the upcoming days leading to the new year. The Country Christmas Show will be held on Friday, December 19th in the Bingo and Concert Hall. There will be two shows, one at 6:30 p.m. and one at 9 p.m. The show will feature look- and sound-alikes performing songs by Brooks & Dunn, Shania Twain, Tim McGraw and Garth Brooks. On New Year's Eve, there will be a show by the group DNA in the Blue Water Resort & Casino's Dig Lounge. Also on New Year's Eve, Dustin White and the Jeff Jones Trio will perform in the Mohave I & II rooms at the resort from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Finally, all month, the Dig Lounge will be hosting Monday Night Football and Monday Night Karaoke after the game.

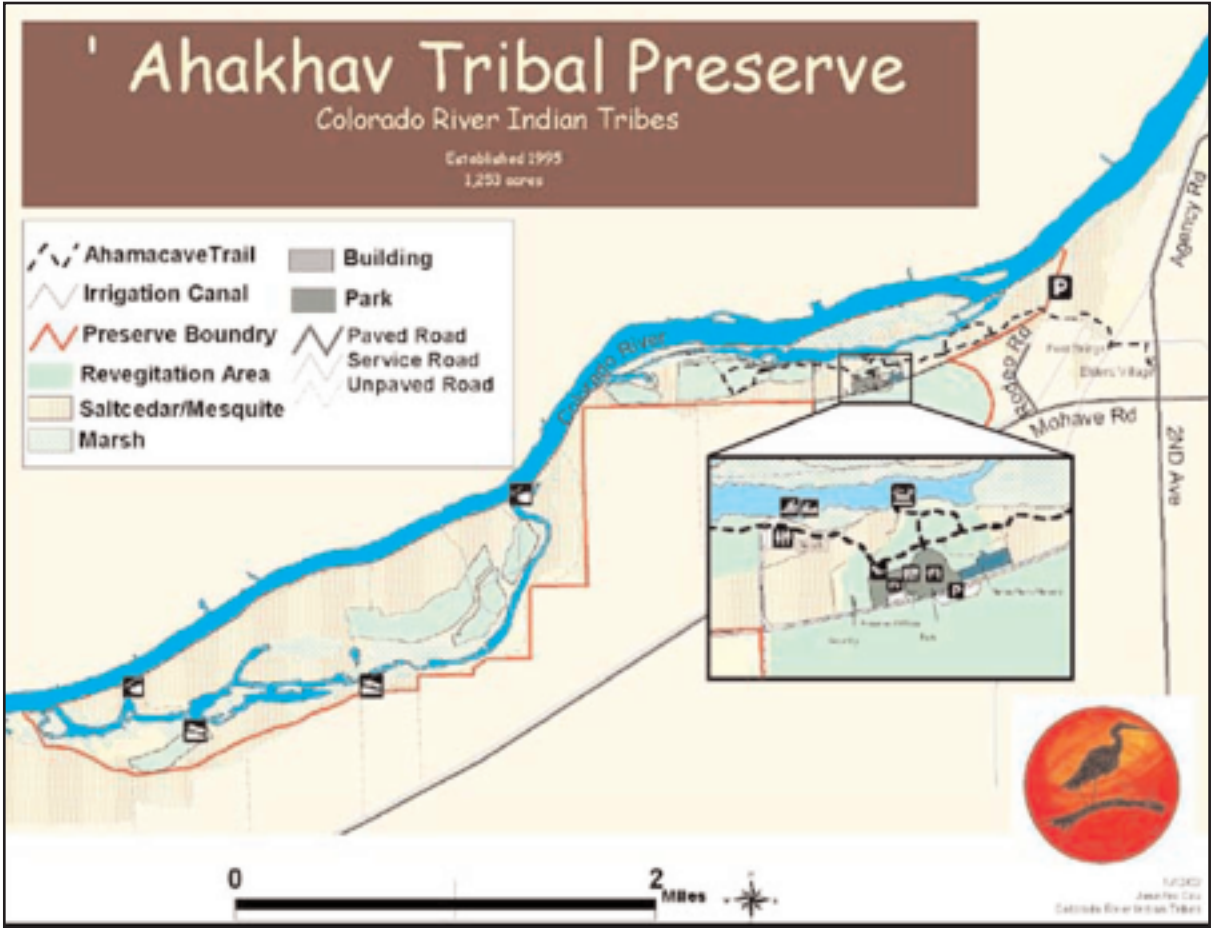
## Recreation Department plans holiday events, awards

The CRIT Recreation Department has several events on the horizon:

- December 20th will be the annual Christmas Party. Mattel Corporation has donated toys for the event, and Santa Claus will be appearing. The event will be held at either the meeting hall or park, but the location is yet to be determined.
- The Youth Explorer Program will be presenting its awards in a ceremony on December 9th to outstanding members of the adventure-based program.
- Congratulations to the CRIT Recreation After School Program for sending a team to the national Cross-Country championships.
- Finally, CRIT Recreation will be hosting a New Year's event. For more information, call the recreation department or visit its web site at the address above.

## Library events, programs continue throughout holiday season

- On December 29th, the CRIT Library will be hosting "Native American Medicine: Principles, Values, and Practices of the Living Tradition" by Kenneth Cohen, author of the critically acclaimed book *Honoring the Medicine: The Essential Guide to Native American Healing*. This event will take place at the Senior Citizens MO-Chem-Ho-Na Center.
- Tutoring services are now being offered for school children. Parents please inform Jackie Heredia what subjects your child needs tutoring in, and also make sure your child has the appropriate school material to work with, in tutoring. This service will be offered Monday through Thursday from 3 to 5 p.m.
- Before the holidays, the Library will once again be offering a class on "How to Create a Label." Watch for posters of time and dates. If you have any questions about the software or classes offered, contact Gilford Harper at (928) 669-1332.
- Also, coming up in December during school intersession, the Library will be offering Computer Camp. For more information on workshops, and training, please call the Library at (928) 669-1332.



# Preserve enhancement continues

Work continues on improving and enhancing the Tribes' Ahakhav Preserve along the Colorado River. The 1,350-acre preserve was founded in 1995, and since then has been the site of extensive renovation and improvement, from creation of a new park to revegetating the area with native plants. "It's an awesome place," said Jon Villalobos, director of the preserve. "It's a multi-faceted project with each aspect complementing one another, but there is a tremendous amount of work left." Some of the most recent work includes:

- Ongoing restoration and revegetation work throughout the area, which includes the removal of Salt Cedar trees and planting with native Mesquite, Cottonwood and other vegetation. Of 11 areas currently earmarked for revegetation, eight have been completed.

The largest area, called "CRIT 9," is currently underway and is about half replanted. Much of the funding for these efforts have come from state and federal governments. Trees in some replanted areas

have already grown from 3 feet in height to 15 feet, in just a few short years.

- CRIT 9 is the site of the first "modern" techniques for replanting, including the use of global positioning satellites and laser land leveling. Local farmers Greg Sprawls (CRIT Farms), Francisco Diaz (D & D Farms) and Herculano Casares, (H & C Farms) provide a tremendous amount of expertise and donations to the preserve.
- Using grants provided by the Arizona Department of Transportation and Arizona State Parks, the preserve staff is within 60 days of completing the park improvement project, which will enhance the park with new ramadas, storage, signs and other features. The beach will be closed through Jan. 1 while renovations are being made.
- The preserve has been the site of a number of environmental educational camps for local school districts. The Preserve Department encourages anyone interested in learning more or volunteering at the preserve to call them at (928) 669-2664, or visit [www.ahakhav.com](http://www.ahakhav.com)

# Johnson O'Malley program assists children

## Provides supplemental services to help Native American students

The Johnson O'Malley program has been restarted locally to provide local Native American students with important needs. The program was revived by Bruce Poolaw in early February. It is funded by federal and tribal dollars, and is designed to provide Native American students with items that will help their education and extracurricular activities, including everything from eyeglasses to athletic equipment to tutoring. "The response has been very positive," Poolaw said. "We've had a lot of good input from people." The Johnson O'Malley program also tracks the progress of students and helps identify when they are having problems. And, it provides support to the CRIT Intertribal Youth Council, which attends a national leadership conference each year.



Bruce Poolaw

Several hundred students are now in the program locally, ranging from three-year-olds in Head Start programs to seniors in high school.

## Upcoming Events

The Johnson O'Malley program will provide tutoring services every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Tutoring services will be at the JOM building, located on First Avenue and Agency Road. They are open to all Native American students. The JOM program is also hosting a Book Club that will begin early this month. The Book Club will be open to 11th and 12th Grade Native American students, but is limited to 15 students. The purpose of the club is to give Native American Students an awareness of Native American history that has been left out of many text books. It will continue throughout the year and will review the U.S. Constitution, the Indian Civil Rights Act and the CRIT Constitution and bylaws. For more information, or to sign up for tutoring or the book club, call Bruce Poolaw at (928) 669-3072.



# Lawsuit protects tribe

Chairman: ‘We want what we paid for’

CRIT has filed a lawsuit against the group that designed and built the Blue Water Resort & Casino over construction mistakes. CRIT is suing Tri-Star Construction and PCL Construction, which joint-ventured on the resort. Tri-Star designed the facility, and PCL was the primary construction firm. PCL is a Canadian company with over \$1 billion in annual revenues.

The lawsuit was filed to protect tribal members by making sure the Tribe received what it was promised from construction.

There are no problems with the Blue Water facility that would affect its safety or business operations. Most of the issues in the lawsuit involve work that was not done as promised by the contractors or features that were included in the design but were not actually constructed.

“The Blue Water Resort & Casino is a terrific facility and continues to be an economic engine for our people and the entire Western Arizona region,” said Tribal Chairman Daniel Eddy, Jr. “However, it is clear that the Tribes did not get what we paid for. It’s unfortunate that we have to file this lawsuit in an effort to get these massive companies to stand by their work.”

The suit seeks monetary damages to cover the cost of finishing and repairing all remaining issues at the facility. CRIT will keep its members updated on the progress of the lawsuit in upcoming issues.

## Employee’s departure means Tribes are losing a treasure

Charley Ameelyenah gained employment with CRIT in 1993 as Inventory Clerk. He soon became Accounting Department Cashier. As the cashier, he was the smiling face that everyone grew to expect to see on a daily basis. He has an amazing sense of humor, and always has a smile on his face. Charley also worked as the 638 Contract Specialist. Through 10 years, everyone has, at some point, had his or her day brightened by Charley. He is truly a treasure and we are sorry to see him go. He has been offered a job at IHS as the Supply Clerk. Everyone in the Accounting Department wants to wish our friend and co-worker farewell and all the luck in the future.



Charley Ameelyenah

## LANDS,

From Page 1

President Wilson through an executive order.

Around the turn of the last century, a mining company approached the Tribe to secure a lease for a silver mining operation on the La Paz lands. When the Tribe refused, the company lobbied Wilson to cut the La Paz lands from the reservation. Wilson gave in to the mining interests and issued an executive order that took the lands from the Colorado River Indian Tribes without compensation.

There are some active mining claims currently in place on the La Paz lands. The "Colorado River Indian Reservation Boundary Correction Act", sponsored by Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-Arizona) and supported by Congressmen Flake, Renzi, Hayworth and Pastor, would preserve those mining claims.

Additionally, a parcel of 320 acres of State Trust land that was created within the La Paz lands along Interstate 10 would not be included in any transfer of the La Paz lands back to the Tribe.

The state would continue to have ingress and egress along I-10.

“We’ve been working for decades to have these lands returned to our Tribe because we believe it is the fair and right thing for the



Federal Government to do," said Tribal Chairman Daniel Eddy, Jr. "We simply want to see a past wrong corrected and have these lands returned to our people."

The Grijalva legislation was introduced a couple of weeks ago, and marked the first attempt at a legislative remedy in more than two decades. The bill is in committee now.

## TAXES,

From Page 1

Upon receiving additional information from CRIT in April, ADOR issued a second letter in May that attempted to clarify the tax-exempt status of CRIT members within the Town.

While that letter confirmed CRIT members to be exempt from State and Town sales taxes on tribal land within the Town of Parker, it failed to clearly address whether CRIT members are exempt from those taxes when shopping at businesses located on fee land within the Town.

CRIT asked ADOR to further clarify its position and it did so on October 10.

The October 10 letter withdrew the incorrect April letter and modified the May letter stating, "It is the Department of Revenue’s current position that Arizona’s transaction privilege tax

and the Town of Parker’s privilege tax are not applicable to transactions that occur on fee land located within the exterior boundaries of the Colorado River Indian Reservation between non-Native American owned businesses...and 1) enrolled members of the CRIT, 2) CRIT enterprises, and 3) the CRIT government."

"We were surprised that the Town of Parker pursued this matter for so long when legal opinions were so clearly on our side," Chairman Eddy said.

"We are pleased that the Arizona Department of Revenue has ruled in our favor in this case."

However, in order to be eligible for tax exemption, tribal members must show their enrollment cards and fill out ADOR Form 5000. The forms are available at the Tribal Administrative Offices and at Realty Services.

The CRIT Legal Department can assist members in filling out these forms.



**COLORADO RIVER INDIAN TRIBES**  
Colorado River Indian Reservation  
Route 1, Box 23-B  
Parker, AZ 85344

Presorted  
Standard  
U S Postage  
**PAID**  
Phoenix, AZ  
Permit #1383

## Call Us!

Got news? Submit your comments, questions  
and story ideas to Manataba Messenger:  
(928) 669-1233  
or (928) 669-1223  
Thank you for reading this issue!